

From: [Maya Keshavan](#)
To: [Young, Victor \(BOS\)](#)
Cc: [John Trasvina; rex@rexridgeway.com; Joel Engardio; Breed, Mayor London \(MYR\)](#)
Subject: Algebra Resolution 231-017, 231-019 public comment
Date: Friday, November 10, 2023 1:44:50 PM

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To the Board of Supervisors:

In the fall of 2013 at Back to School night at Roosevelt Middle School my son's Algebra I teacher told us this would be the last year Algebra I would be taught in eighth grade. I remember thinking this can't possibly be true. I thought all I needed to do was to go to a Board of Education meeting to explain why this was a really bad idea and it would all be fixed.

It was not.

For years in SFUSD all students took Algebra I in eighth grade. The new sequence delayed Algebra I to ninth grade for all students. This made it impossible to reach calculus in twelfth grade without workarounds.

My daughter, the class of 2020, is two years younger than my son and was caught in this delay.

I paid \$700 for an on-line accredited high school UC-approved Algebra I class which she took concurrently with her eighth grade math class. We were fortunate that I'm an electrical engineer and my son had taken Algebra I recently so we could help her when she got stuck.

To get a sense how long this has been going on? My son is now an electrical engineer himself and my daughter is a senior at a STEM college. She graduates in May.

Over the years I would email the Board of Education and superintendent with my worries the math sequence was creating unnecessary barriers for underserved students. I didn't get much response except telling me that this sequence change was working but without providing any raw data to back their claims.

I realized the district was not going to be transparent and it would take public data requests to understand what was really going on. Which I made.

I finally received [raw data](#) in the summer of 2021 after years of stonewalling.

For years SFUSD said 40% of the final eighth-grade Algebra I class (class of 2018) had to repeat the class in ninth grade.

[The data](#) received from the district shows that 100 out of 2,359 students (4.2% not 40%) failed Algebra I in 2013-14. This was the eighth grade year of the class of 2018, the last year before Algebra I was delayed.

The class of 2019 took Algebra I in ninth grade in 2015-16. 195 out of 2,957 students (6.6%)

From: [Brian R](#)
To: [Young, Victor \(BOS\)](#)
Cc: trasvina2@gmail.com
Subject: Algebra Resolution 231-017, 231-019
Date: Friday, November 10, 2023 11:12:25 AM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

I am writing in support of Algebra Resolution 231-017, 231-019.

Doubtless your inboxes are full of evidence demonstrating that removing Algebra from 8th grade was a failure. I've yet to see a good faith, objective argument demonstrating that the policy implemented in 2014 helped ANYBODY, least of which the underserved communities some advocates purport to serve.

I understand this is a separate discussion but it is a related theme: the great majority feel the same way about Lowell High School and efforts to "de-merit" admissions. Lowell is a crown jewel for public education **everywhere**, much less SFUSD. Again: who is helped by changing Lowell? Why do we focus on Lowell instead of placing our attention on K-8 education so that we can have more kids ready for Lowell?

And to the point here: why do we remove Algebra instead of focusing on making more kids ready for Algebra before 8th grade?

SFUSD is in crisis. It needs to do more to ATTRACT families. We cannot continue to pursue paths that do the exact opposite - while doing absolutely nothing tangible to help the underserved communities some claim to advocate for.

Thanks for your attention

Brian Rovner

From: [Quincy Yu](#)
To: [Young, Victor \(BOS\)](#)
Cc: [John Trasvina](#)
Subject: Algebra Resolution 231-019
Date: Sunday, November 12, 2023 4:05:23 PM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

I write to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors Rules Committee in support of the resolution to re-offer Algebra 1 to students by the 8th grade.

Prior to 2014, Algebra 1 was offered to San Francisco Unified (SFUSD) students in the 8th grade. In 2014, the SF Unified School District tried an experiment to end 8th grade Algebra for all because it felt it was not "equitable" and believed that delaying its availability would improve Algebra and math proficiency for all students.

Algebra and math proficiency did not improve. The change made it harder for students to reach and pass calculus by 12th grade. The results speak for themselves; this experiment failed and actually hampered the progress of students...yet SFUSD failed to reverse this decision even with the feedback from parents and mathematics education experts in leading universities in California.

Offering Algebra 1 in 8th grade is critical to strengthening educational opportunities for San Francisco students to ready them for science, technology, engineering, & math (STEM) careers. To have opportunities right in their backyard for students, but not taking the necessary steps in preparing them to be eligible for those careers is criminal.

The Board of Supervisors may not have direct control over SFUSD, but it is a body that should reflect the sentiments of those it represents to the government bodies that serve its constituents. I thank Supervisors Engardio, Dorsey, Safai, Stefani and Melgar for sponsoring this ballot measure, and ask the Rules Committee supports the furtherance of this ballot measure.

Respectfully,

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Quincy Yu
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failed.

There was no improvement.

The district later added [a caveat](#) (in speaker notes) there was a one-time drop in course repeats between the Class of 2018, last with Algebra 1 in eighth grade and the Class of 2019, first delayed to ninth-grade group.

In the case of the Class of 2018, they said, a student had to score proficient on the Algebra I California Standardized Test (CST) or retake the class. The CST/STAR tests was the old testing system used prior to the Smarter Balanced Assessment testing (SBAC).

There was no such test for the class of 2019. It is disingenuous to compare under two very different conditions.

Meanwhile, October 2013 the CSTs were [discontinued](#) to make way for SBAC field testing. The 2013-14 school year was when the class of 2018 was in eighth grade taking Algebra I. There were no CSTs administered except for science. What exam were they taking? The district has yet to clarify.

Even with the caveat the districts claims can not be reproduced. I speculate somebody made a decimal point error when calculating percents for the class of 2018 and 4% became 40%.

SFUSD also says there has been an increase in precalculus enrollment. There has not.

SFUSD created a compression class called Algebra II + Precalculus for eleventh graders to take so they can take calculus in twelfth if they want. The problem? This class is missing a lot of precalculus content. UC, which analyzes state high school classes to verify they meet state standards, [does not recognize](#) this class as precalculus and categorizes it as Algebra II. Last year, prominent STEM college professors [sent a letter](#) to the SFUSD math department calling this class “antithetical to responsible preparation”.

Recently [a study](#) by a Stanford group corroborated this is not working. Although the people involved in the study were bamboozled by the district into believing the compression course was precalculus when it is not. They have admitted their mistake to The [San Francisco Standard](#).

As you can see this has been going on for years with the district refusing to acknowledge mistakes.

I see this resolution as a last resort to put public pressure on the district with the weight of the city behind it. A ballot measure, while non binding, will demonstrate once and for all the public supports SFUSD students having access to Algebra I in eighth grade, as most every other district in the state provides.

The most vulnerable students are being left behind. Those who want to go into science or engineering deserve access to the same classes as their privileged counterparts so they too can be future leaders in science and technology.

We can't afford to let another 10 years slip by.

Thank you for your time.

Maya Keshavan

From: [Vincent Chao](#)
To: [Young, Victor \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Reinstate 8th grade Algebra 1
Date: Monday, November 13, 2023 12:16:32 PM

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Many years ago, superintendent Carranza banned 8th Grade Algebra 1 from the middle school curriculum, based on some research on brain development by a Stanford professor. Then, Mr Carranza was appointed Chancellor of the NYC schools. He mandated Algebra 1 to be taught to all 8th graders, implying that students in NYC develop their brains one year ahead of students in SF. Earlier this year, Palo Alto USD was sued by parents and 8th grade Algebra 1 was reinstated. By the way, Algebra 1 is taught in the 6th and 7th grades in most countries in Europe as well as in India and East Asia, HK, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan, Korea and some schools in China etc...

The Mission Statement of SFUSD is to support all students to develop academically to their Full Potential. Therefore, all students interested and qualified in STEM should be able to take Algebra 1 in the 8th Grade. A strand for STEM from 6th thru 12th grades, should be offered, as well as other STEM subjects. For EX.: at least a couple of Middle schools and one High school in the East side of the City and the same for the West side. All STEM students should be taking AP Calculus by their Senior year, if interested. After all, San Francisco is the Tech capital of the USA, with Silicon Valley right next door and many many Tech related job openings...

As a retired SF school principal, I expect all SF students to get a high standard education, including 8th Grade Algebra 1 to AP Calculus for the ones interested in future STEM related carriers

Vincent Chao

From: [Julie Soo](#)
To: [Young, Victor \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Letter in Support of Algebra Resolution 231-017, 231-019 (8th Grade Algebra)
Date: Monday, November 13, 2023 11:43:33 AM
Attachments: [LETTER IN SUPPORT OF 8TH GRADE ALGEBRA 111323.pdf](#)

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Please see attached letter for distribution to the Supervisors.

Thank you.

All best,
JULIE
蘇榮麗
(415) 260-5886 (cell)

Julie D. Soo, Esq.
Commissioner, San Francisco Sheriff's Department Oversight Board (2021 - present)
Former Co-Chair, California Democratic Party Platform Committee (2005 - 2023)
Former Commissioner, San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women (2009 - 2021)

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PLEASE NOTE that Enforcement – San Francisco is now Enforcement – Oakland.

My new address effective February 24, 2020 is 1901 Harrison Street, 6th Floor, Oakland, CA 94612.

My direct phone line remains the same but please note the new fax number.